

# Libraries

On a quick first pass through the main library, students often notice the “womb” chairs and the “RAE board”. The “womb” chairs with their spherical cushioned interiors exemplify the protected comfort the library system offers individual scholars. The “RAE board” represents the library at its more interpersonal: here students post questions and comments for the director of libraries, Ray English. He, like his staff, is eager to respond to and engage Oberlin students in dialogue about information access and the many other services the library system at Oberlin College provides. These are useful examples in learning about the libraries, but no representative symbol can begin to convey the breadth and depth of the collections and services the Oberlin College libraries offer. The best way to learn about them is to use them, and Oberlin College students do just that.

## **A University Library's Scope with Small College Service**

Students at Oberlin have access to superior library resources, comparable to large universities in many respects. Points of comparison include: strong collections housed locally, extensive electronic access to databases and electronic media, attractive and spacious facilities that enable students to take best advantage of the collection's resources, and an excellent reference staff to help students work their way through the complexities that characterize modern academic libraries.

## **Extraordinary Service to Undergraduates from Reference Staff**

The reference staff is composed of professionals whose mission is to help undergraduates identify, select, and evaluate information most pertinent to their academic needs. They are especially skilled in teaching students how to use information effectively. In addition to providing reference desk service during many hours that the library is open, they offer individualized research appointments to any Oberlin student.

## **Size of Collection**

Oberlin has one of the finest and largest undergraduate library systems in the nation. The total collection numbers over 2.2 million items, plus the OhioLINK program provides rapid access to nearly 46 million additional volumes held

within the state of Ohio. Within Oberlin's collection are approximately 1,300,000 cataloged volumes, extensive US government documents holdings, 1,900 print periodical subscriptions, over 18,000 electronic subscriptions, over 200 online databases, 74 current newspapers, LEXIS/NEXIS, JSTOR, ERes, and Internet resources.

## **Strengths of Collection**

Collection strengths include music, art, American history, African and African-American studies, women's studies, and East Asian studies. Special Collections houses one of the preeminent collections of abolitionist literature in the country.

## **Libraries Usage**

The library's circulation rates for books and other materials have long been among the highest for all liberal arts colleges. That's another way of saying that the libraries at Oberlin are used; they're not empty, dusty, forgotten places. They are an integral part of the academic and social life of the College and Conservatory. They speak to the academic intensity of Oberlin. Visit the libraries on an evening or weekend and you'll see what we mean.

To learn more about the libraries at Oberlin College, or to browse the catalog go to: <http://www.oberlin.edu/library/>

## **Main Library**

The Main Library, housed in Mudd Center, is the central library facility for Oberlin College, and is the primary location for materials in the humanities and social sciences. It also houses interdisciplinary and general interest works, as well as the mathematics and computer science collections. Administrative and most technical services staff for the entire library system are located in the main library.

Facility features: open stacks, 40 scholar studies, 214 study carrels, womb chairs, seating capacity for 1,000, 567 study spaces, six group study rooms, 50-seat electronic classroom, late-night study area, sun deck, and wireless campus network access. Twenty laptop computers are available for loan, outfitted with wireless adapters

configured to access the campus network from anywhere within Mudd Center.

Oberlin College Main Library

Mudd Center

148 West College Street

Oberlin, OH 44074-1532

tel. (440)775-8285 fax (440)775-6586

### **Science Library**

The new Science Library is located on the ground floor of the central building of the new science center complex and is a focal point of the new project, designed to enhance services to science students and faculty as well as non-majors. The library endeavors to support the science curriculum, research, and teaching, as well as expansion of scientific literacy among the student population at large. The Science Library's collection includes over 97,000 bound volumes, 220 current periodical subscriptions in print, and thousands of electronic journal subscriptions.

Facility features: 30-seat computer lab, two group study rooms, attractive and spacious reading area, 30 individual study carrels, electricity and data ports (with rapid access to the campus network) at all tables and carrels, and access to the wireless network throughout the library. Laptop computers are offered for loan and may also be used in the adjacent Commons area.

Science Library

Science Center

119 Woodland Street

Oberlin, OH 44074-1047

tel: (440) 775-8310 fax: (440) 775-6586

### **Clarence Ward Art Library**

The Clarence Ward Art Library is integrated within the studio art/art history/Allen Memorial Art Museum complex where it serves majors and non-majors alike.

The collection covers all of the visual arts fields including architecture, painting, sculpture, drawing, prints, photography, and the decorative arts, as well as material in related fields. The collection of over 90,000 volumes and

190 periodical subscriptions covers the visual arts of all periods, prehistoric through modern, and of all nationalities with special emphasis on Western European, Chinese, Japanese, and American art.

Facility features: The Clarence Ward Art Library is located on the top floor of the Allen Art Building. Services include individual study carrels, color copying and printing, scanning, and 3 laptops available for loan.

Clarence Ward Art Library

Oberlin College

83 North Main Street

Oberlin, OH 44074-1193

tel. (440)775-8635 fax (440)775-8969

### **Conservatory Library**

The Conservatory Library adjoins the Conservatory of Music for convenient access to students in the Conservatory of Music, as well as Arts & Sciences students taking advantage of Oberlin's myriad musical offerings.

The Conservatory Library's collection exceeds 205,000 items making it comparable to the largest music libraries in academic settings both public and private. The collections include more than 68,000 sound recordings, over 107,000 musical scores, more than 57,000 books about music, and 220 periodical titles. New acquisitions number at approximately 2,000 recordings, 3,000 scores, and 1,400 books each year. The library's collection includes a substantial foundation of Western art music from all historical periods, complete editions of the works of major composers, as well as an ever-growing collection in the areas of women musicians and American, ethnic, contemporary, jazz, folk, and popular music. There are also four laptop computers offered for loan.

Conservatory Library

Oberlin Conservatory of Music

77 West College St.

Oberlin, OH 44074-1588

tel. (440) 775-8280 fax (440) 775-8203

### **Other Highlights of Oberlin College Libraries**

- OBIS, the online catalog, provides comprehensive access to the library's collections and is fully accessible from the campus network and from remote locations.

Titles may be checked out for an entire semester, and they are always available through a rapid recall system. On weeknights, the library doesn't close until well after the 'Sco has opened.

Active Friends of Oberlin College Library group, with discounted student membership available, sponsors lectures, displays, receptions, trips, and other activities. Student needs are central to the library's mission. One example of this: they are encouraged to submit requests for titles and media not currently available at Oberlin.

#### **National Recognition for the Oberlin College Library**

The Oberlin College Library received the 2002 Excellence in Academic Libraries Award from the Association of College and Research Libraries. The award program recognizes libraries that provide exemplary services and resources to their users. Oberlin received the award in recognition of the Library's long tradition of excellence in its services and programs and its national and regional leadership in the library profession.

Revised 9/2005